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**GREAT BASIN**  
**WATER NETWORK**

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RE: SNPLMA-STYLE PROPOSAL

To Whom It May Concern:

The Great Basin Water Network does not have a policy of categorically opposing public land sales. But when legislation arises that promotes those practices without extensive study of future water demand, we believe that it is imperative to offer our perspective.

With revenue from land sales a potential low-hanging fruit to make up for funding shortfalls, policies like *Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act* are tempting, but they are cosmetic solutions to foundation problems. We urge you to re-consider this route.

SNPLMA land sales perpetuate the mantra and myth that all urban growth is good growth. Policies like SNPLMA discourage infill development, shortchange public participation, and give real estate developers and bureaucrats the biggest say in the future of community growth.

For decades we fought the Las Vegas Pipeline, a water importation project that would have drained 58 billion gallons of water annually from rural aquifers in Eastern Nevada and Western Utah – with an estimated construction cost of more than \$15.5 billion. We believe that SNPLMA's pro-growth ambitions perpetuated the purported need for an expensive, illegal and unsustainable project.

Public land sales make a big assumption: Water will be available in perpetuity to serve the families and businesses that take title to what was once in the public domain.

Once a SNPLMA-like policy is put in place, it's not a question of "if" federal lands will be sold, it's a question of how many acres and how fast. That poses a major question for local governments: Can they keep up with the demand for services?

We believe that policies like SNPLMA exacerbate funding shortfalls for essential government services. A good example: Five percent of SNPLMA funds are slated for public education. But since the passage of the bill, the state has enacted multiple tax increases specifically for education. Nevada still ranks as one of the worst states for public education in the nation.

As it relates to water -- arguably the most essential government service —there is no doubt that SNPLMA created a greater demand in the fastest warming city with the smallest allocation of the Colorado River.

SNPLMA does have a carve out to send proceeds to the Southern Nevada Water Authority. But since SNPLMA's passage, multiple rate increases and a tax hike for water demonstrate that the new demands spurred by developments on public lands have not been able to pay for themselves.

Right now, the SNWA is considering a rate increase that will amount to \$3 billion in the coming years for new infrastructure, conservation efforts and partnerships to build a sustainable water supply. We support much of what's in that proposal. But we ask, would it be necessary if not for the past, present and future growth spurred by SNPLMA.

One question to ask: Is passing a SNPLMA bill commensurate to passing a de facto tax or rate hike on current residents and future ones?

We think that the best way to develop communities is by demanding local governments invite diverse groups of stakeholders to discuss, debate and plan the future of communities. The cost of a SNPLMA style bill should be considered at much more than face value. As Nevada has demonstrated, SNPLMA won't solve all of its funding problems. But it will exacerbate existing ones.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle Roerink', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kyle Roerink  
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Great Basin Water Network  
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